

March-April
2003

The Correctional Signpost



A Message from the Director

Bill Slaughter

Legislative session keeps us all busy

We are all up to our necks in the 2003 Legislature.

Thanks to all of our Corrections staff for working hard and holding down the fort for your administrators and supervisors, who are currently preoccupied with legislative responsibilities.

I am proud of the presentations made to our legislative committee by the division administrators as well as the work being done each day by our chief legal counsel and our Central Services Division staff, who are donning fiscal hats and responding to the mountains of data being requested. Everyone from Juvenile Corrections to the boot camp has really pulled together.

Corrections made its case along with representatives from the prerelease centers. Our committee was respectful and seemed to truly understand our needs.

You have undoubtedly heard our budget is up and down in the session. That type of activity is to be expected and will only be settled near the end of the session when the

More MESSAGE, page 2

Inmate fire crew looks ahead to summer

*By Gail Boese, Administrative Officer
Montana Correctional Enterprises*

With the official first day of spring less than a month away, the Montana State Prison wildland firefighting crew is gearing up for its second fire season.

Revived during the winter of 2001-02 and named the Ridgerunners, the crew was ready last June 15 when a controlled burn at the University of Montana's Lubrecht Experimental Forest 30 miles west of Missoula jumped containment lines and quickly spread to 12 acres. Most of the crew's time was spent laying out fire hose and performing mop-up duties.

The Ridgerunners assisted in four other fires last season, including the Long Canyon Fire and the Moyie Gulch Fire, which marked a significant change in tactics and logistics, requiring extreme hikes through rugged terrain in remote locations, and helicopter transports.

Although fire activity in Montana was below average last year — no comparison to the record fire years of 2000 and 2001 — the season proved an excellent opportunity for the Ridgerunners to gain valuable experience and display their readiness and natural abilities in the field.

Much of the decision to bring back the MSP wildland firefighting crew was based upon the need for a well-trained and dependable crew to help protect Montana's wildlands from the plague of wildfires across the western U.S. in recent years, brought on by severe drought conditions.

The plan was successful due to the tireless efforts of Charlie Strong, MSP Work Dorm Unit Manager, and the cooperative efforts of MSP, Montana Correctional Enterprises, and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). The crew, which includes 10 inmates, lead fire supervisor Tom Gillibrand and two other correctional officers, was credited by other firefighters for their quick and thorough mobilization. Five more inmates are expected to join the crew for the 2003 season. The crew works under the direction of a DNRC fire boss.

During the off-season, the Ridgerunners are busy with general maintenance and beautification projects on the prison grounds. The crew currently is thinning lodgepole pine trees on Elk Ridge in areas clear-cut 20 years ago. According to the DNRC, this will promote better and larger tree growth. □





The Correctional Signpost

Published bimonthly by the Montana Department of Corrections, 1539 11th Avenue, Helena, MT. Employees are encouraged to contribute articles, photos and ideas for future issues. See us on the website at www.cor.state.mt.us.

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DOC employees give generously to charity

The Department of Corrections came in second among all state agencies for the percentage of increase in its employee contributions to the State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign from 2002 to 2003.

DOC employees contributed \$7,838, up 54 percent from \$5,098 in 2002. Only the Judiciary grew more, from \$3,711 in 2002 to \$6,295 in 2003, a 79 percent increase. "This demonstrates that we are one of the best and most caring of agencies," said Marwan Saba of the Human Resources Bureau, who coordinated the giving campaign for the department.

The United Way easily reached its \$300,000 goal for 2003 with the generous support of state employees, who have given a total of nearly \$2.5 million since 1991.

Thanks to the following DOC employees who helped make the campaign a success: Cynthia Davenport, Montana State Prison; RaeAnn Vasquez, Treasure State Correctional Training Center; Sue Walker, Riverside

Youth Correctional Facility; Nancy Schmauch, Probation & Parole; Annamae Derrick, Montana Women's Prison; Sue Trickel, Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility; and Glen Caniparoli, Great Falls Youth Correctional Facility. □

Newsletter back after unscheduled "vacation"

*By Sally Hilander
Public & Victim Information Specialist
a/k/a Signpost editor*

We hope you have noticed *The Correctional Signpost* missing from your mailbox since last November.

Staff changes that followed last summer's budget cuts resulted in the realignment of duties here in the Director's Office, whereby I became the editor.

Sherri Townsend, who managed to produce a great *Signpost* while serving as administrative support to the Director's Office, now provides administrative support to the Health Services Bureau. She performs countless duties in her new capacity and travels more frequently than before. The newsletter became one task too many for Sherri.

While it makes sense for the public information officer (PIO) to produce the newsletter, we're looking at a scaled down, sometimes more sporadic version, one that can be squeezed out between other PIO projects. The number one priority of this office is to provide timely information and services to Montana's crime victims.

Please contribute as many newsletter articles, announcements and photos as you want, but keep text brief and I will do my best to include photos as space permits. Call me anytime at 444-7461, e-mail me at shilander@state.mt.us, or stop by my office, Director's Office Room 214, to share your ideas. □

MESSAGE, from page 1

leadership has a better handle on incoming revenues.

I am confident the legislators will do everything they can to provide us the resources needed to operate the next two years. These are good people who believe in what we do and who value public safety in all of our communities.

We cannot underestimate the situation the state of Montana finds itself in as far as revenues. This legislative session will not have a quick fix to short resources that must be dealt with for the next 24 – 36 months.

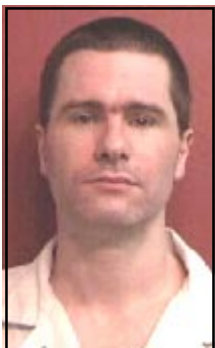
But we will work together to provide excellent services, conserve resources, work as a team, and be responsible to our commitment to public safety and trust. □

Wild West ordered to get off his high horse

Quick thinking, slow steed put skids on inmate escape

By Dan Burden and Diana Solle
Treasure State Correctional Training Center

Dennis West didn't really like his new home at Treasure State Correctional Training Center near Montana State Prison. Expectations of him were high and his standard bag of manipulative tricks was getting him nothing but more confrontation and exercise. He made excuses but no one seemed receptive to those either. Soooo.... before the sun came up on a cold morning last November, he bolted out the back door and headed for the hills.



Dennis West

He didn't think his escape plan through. The temperature was hovering around zero with several inches of fresh snow. But that didn't matter to him because he was mad and he was leaving. He

didn't bother to take a hat or gloves, but was lucky enough to find a coat on the way out the door. His plan was simple. He'd worked at the Cow Camp before and was vocal that if he ever escaped he would steal a horse.

West, 35, was observed going out the door so he didn't have much of a head start. Treasure State immediately implemented their escape apprehension plan and so did the Inner Perimeter Security from Montana State Prison. A command post was set up and search vehicles were put in the area.

Everything continued to go sour for West. He made his way through the brush to the Cow Camp and stole a

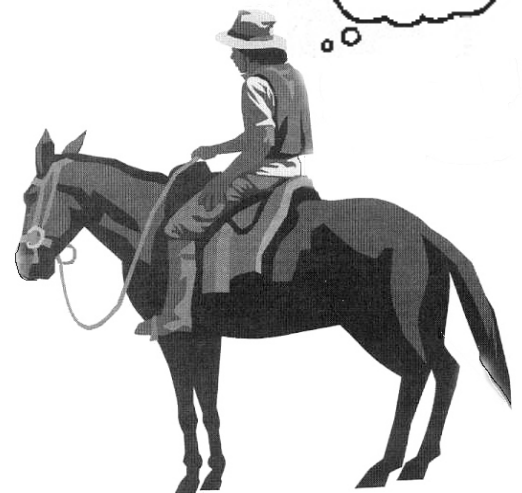
saddle and horse. He fancied himself as a cowboy even though he got fired from the cow camp not long ago. He had trouble figuring out how to get the saddle on and since he was in such a hurry, he just called it good and took off. Unfortunately for him (and fortunately for Treasure State), he chose a passive and slow horse. His equine companion just wouldn't go fast enough. West opened three gates and once again, since he was in such a hurry, he didn't bother to close them.

Two employees were also coming to work at the Cow Camp just about that time. They heard over the radio that Treasure State had an escape and decided they should get a spotlight and help. The command post at MSP got a call from Treasure State alerting them that West might steal a horse, but MSP had already figured that out that Cow Camp was missing a saddle. Checking further, they found a horse was missing along with gloves and a jacket. The employees immediately noticed the open gate and, following the tracks with their four-wheel drive, they found two more open gates.

West's decision to leave the gates open definitely speeded up the tracking process. His tracks led toward Taylor Creek and then into Mullen pasture, but not back out. Searchers soon spotted West riding down one of the draws. He kept riding, ignoring warnings to halt. The horse was slow enough that the two employees eventually jumped out of the truck and chased him on foot. Given the improper way the saddle was mounted, West likely would have fallen off if the horse had actually run. This time he complied with orders to get off the horse and onto his stomach.

The Inner Perimeter Security team and Treasure State had been monitoring their progress closely. In no time West was restrained and taken to the infirmary to be checked out.

West's escape began at 5:50 a.m. and ended at 8:15 a.m., when he was transported to Powell County



Courthouse and charged with escape.

Dennis West had been incarcerated for burglary and issuing bad checks. His original sentence was 20 years with 15 suspended, plus another 10 years with 5 years suspended. His two and a half hours of freedom may turn out to be very expensive. He now resides at MSP.

The cooperation between Cow Camp, Inner Perimeter Security and the Treasure State Correctional Training Center lead to a swift apprehension and is a good example of how working together, we can make progress to make Montana communities safer. □

Congratulations on a job well done

Riverside Youth Correctional Facility

Tom Dawson was named Riverside Youth Correctional Facility's most recent Employee of the Quarter. After serving 16 years as Jefferson County Sheriff, and another seven years as a deputy before that, he chose Riverside as a part of his "retirement plan."

Dawson began his part-time employ at Riverside by helping out in maintenance, Tech-Prep class, gym class, the housing unit, transportation, and wherever else an extra hand was needed. He became a full-time employee last year, working in the housing unit as a correctional counselor.

Whether it's working with the inmates, organizing the key system, or plowing snow, Tom takes pride in his work and said his reward comes when he "sees he might be part of making a difference in a young person's life."

Fellow employee Lee Richardson described him as "a positive influence on the people around him" and "a good team player." His law enforcement experience is reflected in the well-implemented system of radio communication at Riverside. "Dawson's experience in handling young offenders in crisis situations is a real asset during tense situations," Richardson said.

Tom's family homesteaded in Montana in the 1860s. He grew up in Boulder and attended college in Bozeman and Havre. He and his wife, Maureen, live on their cattle ranch with their five children. □



Probation & Parole

Region IV PO II **Randy Gowen** recently received a 10-year pin for his service on the board of Alternatives in Billings. He assists with screening, acts as liaison for DOC and conducts disciplinary hearings for inmates who have been placed at Alternatives. □

Montana State Prison

Laura P. Janes, a nurse in the MSP infirmary, received the Montana Tech Alumni Recognition Award last October. The award is given to Tech graduates who have made significant progress in their careers, have been supportive of the college, and/or clearly warrant recognition for their past achievements and likely future accomplishments.

Laura Janes was nominated by the faculty for this year's award representing alumni of the Nursing Department. Laura was also recognized during halftime activities at Montana Tech's Homecoming football game October 12. □



Charlie Strong

was named Montana State Prison Employee of the Quarter beginning September 17, 2002.

Since Strong began employment at the prison in 1982, he has been a correctional officer, a sergeant on both the low and maximum security sides, and currently is unit manager for Unit

C and the MCE work dorm.

Strong is valued for his common sense approach. He demands nothing of his subordinates that he would not do himself. He attends non-mandatory training, and is a member of the Deer Lodge County Police Commission.

Managing the Montana State Prison wildland fire suppression crew, the Ridgerunners, was one of many projects that demanded Charlie's skills. He developed screening and application procedures, material supply and support, training procedures and security practices and staffing. (See related article on page 1).

The MSP Employee of the Quarter receives a certificate of appreciation, a special parking space, and a pen from the Warden. □

Monique Miller has been selected the MSP Employee of the Quarter beginning February 11.

Miller began her career at MSP as an administrative support person for the Chemical Dependency Department and the Sex Offender Program, but now provides administrative support for the Specialized Treatment Unit.

Miller has established a computer data base for all treatment programs, not only within MSP but throughout the state. Her efforts allow us to provide detailed information about treatment programs for the entire correctional system. She is always thinking of better ways to accomplish tasks. She is a good role model for staff. She brings to work a pleasant attitude and a willingness to help. □



MSP Toys for Tots crew gave cheer to 140 kids

MSP employee **Ray Worthey** and his volunteer helpers distribute toys to more than 140 children from infants to teens this past Christmas. Ray, organizer for the Toys for Tots Programs, was able to provide an average of seven toys to each of these youngsters whose parents were having a difficult time financially.

"The donations were overwhelming," said Worthey, who conducts the annual toy drive with the help of volunteers and inmates at Montana State Prison. Inmates donated \$1,800 out of their own pockets and the Inmate Council matched that amount to bring the total to \$3,600.

Donations from local businesses and individuals allowed the program to double the number of toys given to each child and some of the inmate money was sent to other Toys for Tots programs in Montana that were not so lucky.

Employees at Montana State Prison worked extra hours so Ray could take time off to gather and distribute the toys. The collection drive was spearheaded by the veterans group VVA 699th. MSP donated use of a prison van, and a local trucker and his family donated their time and truck for pickup and delivery of the toys. Local media donated advertising.

Worthey said the inmates already have a committee working on the 2003 Toys for Tots Drive. "To all involved, a sincere thanks." □

THE DEADLINE for submitting articles and photos for the May-June Signpost is March 26. Please e-mail them to shilander@state.mt.us, deadhead them to Sally Hilander at DOC or fax them to (406) 444-4920.

Editorial

DOC does much with little

Rep. Stan Fisher, R-Bigfork (HD75)

(Reprinted from the Bigfork Eagle)

This past week, the subcommittee I chair in the Appropriations Committee reviewed the budget of the Corrections Department and I thought I'd share with you some of the facts and figures that make this department unique.



Stan Fisher

The director of the agency is Bill Slaughter. Prior to taking on this job two years ago he was sheriff in Gallatin County. I have observed several agencies in my two terms here in Helena and I can honestly say Mr. Slaughter and his staff could not have done a finer job of stewardship this past two years.

In the 2001 session, the department's budget was cut severely to \$200.7 million or 3.4 percent of the state's total budget. Compare this budget, if you will, to the Health and Human Services Committee budget of \$2.0 billion (34.9 percent), K-12 budget of \$1.2 billion (20 percent), and Higher Education budget of \$392.5 million (6.7 percent). It might surprise you.

In 2002 the Corrections Department was responsible for 9,421 prisoners or individuals in the parole program. The prisoners that make up this number are in 14 programs or institutions.

To give you a better idea, there are 1,319 male prisoners in Deer Lodge and 1,533 others in five different prisons or programs. The female prison population in Billings is 74, with another 221 in five different programs. In addition, there are 6,356 under the intensive supervision or parole with 6,104 of that number

that are supervised by probation and parole officers.

As of this morning, the total system had 33 beds vacant. They are operating at capacity.

There has been a lot of discussion about the prison in Shelby. This prison is privately owned and, up until August of this year, it helped house Montana's prisoners that our institutions could not hold. In that month, Corrections transferred all of Montana's prisoners into state institutions to reduce costs.

This prison in Shelby has a capacity of some 500 beds and will be badly needed as we see our prisons grow, as now projected, to over 10,369 by 2005. There is a bill in the House carried by Edith Clark of Sweetgrass to permit the institution to bring in out-of-state prisoners until our prisons overflow and space in this prison is again required.

The local economy in Shelby is greatly enhanced by this facility. The local folks are all in favor of keeping it healthy so they do not pay any attention to remarks you might hear to the contrary. Montana has first draw on beds in this prison, if and when we need them. The cost of housing a prisoner in Shelby and Deer Lodge is comparable.

In the past five years our prison system has grown from 7,453 to 9,421 prisoners or parolees. What has caused that increase? Drugs primarily. At the current conviction rate by the courts and society's bad habits, it looks as though we will continue to see our prisons grow.

Not a pretty picture, but as I stated in the outset of this article, the Corrections Department and our local law enforcement people do have their hands full. They are doing a good job. Please contact me with your concerns at (406) 444-4864. □

Tell it to the Judge

Juvenile parole officer shares youth's success story

Michelle Verbance, Juvenile Parole Officer II, sent the following letter last year to the Hon. Ed McLean, 4th Judicial District Judge (Missoula County). C.L. is living independently and working for a logging company. He plans to return to college. -- Ed.

Every once in a great while, there is irrefutable evidence of corrections' positive impact on a youthful offender's life. C. L. began in the Department of Corrections realm at the young age of 14 with an attitude that predicted his continuing in a criminal life and most likely ending up in an adult prison.

He continued to be a high risk to the community and was subsequently revoked back to Pine Hills on numerous occasions. He was offered semi-secure facilities, treatment centers, foster homes, group homes, and family placements without apparent immediate success.

C.L.'s last revocation back to Pine Hills just days after his sixteenth birthday brought about a positive and sincere change within this young man. He had stolen an auto and several valuable items from a woman in Hamilton, including a pistol, cameras and irreplaceable family heirlooms. The victim of this crime confronted him at an on-site hearing conducted by Sam Lemaich in which she told of her horrific fears of a child having this weapon and the sadness of losing the heirlooms, which had belonged to her

deceased mother and grandmother. After having worked with C.L. for the prior two years, I could see in his eyes that this victim had a big impact on this youth, as this was the first time he was ever confronted with the victim's emotional suffering caused by his criminal actions.

During his final nine-month incarceration period at the state correctional facility, he accomplished a great deal through the supportive and caring Pine Hills staff to include: receiving his GED at the age of sixteen, paying the \$750 restitution owed to the victim through the restitution program, successfully completing his treatment program, and earning approximately \$2,500 working for a local Miles City rancher. Although it is seldom that an offender is allowed to leave the correctional facility unsupervised for employment purposes, Pine Hills Staff, community corrections staff and (then) Superintendent Steve Gibson believed in his abilities and gave him the special consideration of a work furlough. He did not fail and the rancher was extremely pleased with his performance.

Upon his return to the community, he had a few minor mishaps but for the most part, a genuine positive change in his attitude and behaviors prevailed. At the age of seventeen, the impact of Pine Hills staff, and his parole officers' believing in him brought about a transformation in the young man that he believed he could

succeed. Thanks to the efforts of our community outreach worker Tom Pinsonneault, C.L.'s impulses towards criminal behaviors were diminishing and he began to focus on his future. Tom aided him in obtaining employment and saving money for college, he took him to the University of Montana and walked him through the steps of taking the college entrance exam, filling out the paperwork for financial aid, and aiding him with the understanding of which college could best serve his needs. C.L. began to see Tom as a role model and this relationship flourished.

C.L. chose to attend Western Montana University in Dillon, Montana. He was placed with a loving foster family who focused on his intelligence and abilities. He completed his first semester successfully with two As, one B, and two Cs. He is extremely grateful to the Department of Corrections and especially to Director Bill Slaughter and Steve Gibson, as they believed in this youth enough to approve a tuition waiver in which his first year of college tuition is paid.

He discharged from the Department's supervision in February, but he still makes the time to call Tom and me to just check in to say hello. He even stops by the office when he's in the Missoula area and we catch up on his current activities.

As a juvenile parole officer for the past 11 years, I have discovered that when an offender's file gets more than four inches thick, the likelihood of him continuing on into the adult criminal justice system is extremely likely. Although C.L.'s file is more than six inches thick, I believe he will become an asset to any community and this wouldn't have taken place if it weren't for the extraordinary team efforts of the Department of Corrections professional staff going that extra mile. □

WHICH WAY ARE YOU GOING?



Carpooling opportunities for state employees in the greater Helena area are now available through TAWSE (Try Another Way State Employees). Visit our website for lots of ideas on how to save money on transportation!

www.tawse.state.mt.us



New Employees

Centralized Services

January 2003

Mary Ann Noel
Debbie Pengra-Arneson

Montana State Prison

October 2002

Brenda Cuedek
Josh Hotalen
Douglas Jager
Robin Manderville
John Richie
Fred Saur
Martha Sevier
Phillip Shelton

November 2002

Chris A. McKee
December 2002
Robert Wareham
December 2002
Jason Beckstead
Rick Cotton
William Forrest
Kevin Hart
Patty Hill
Daryl McCormick
Marcus Sepulveda

January 2003

Vera Babcock
Kristin Blomquist
Traci Buck
Michael Downs
Leslie Gervais
David Gregory
Blair Hopkins
Paul Hulen
Donna Prosenick
Barbara Tymofichuk

Montana Womens Prison

December 2002

Kathryn Boehm
Linda Bofto
Scott Campbell
Henry Stewart
January 2003
Gary Kirchmar

Pine Hills YCF

October 2002

Barry Dutton
Ryan Fisher
Steve Kransky
Keri Mendenhall
Casey Peterson
Donald Westall
Rebecca Zawada
December 2002
James Jess
January 2003
Cody Butler
Chad Cyrus

Probation & Parole

November 2002

Rae Marie Baker – Kalispell
Erik Carlson – Butte

Riverside YCF

November 2002

Dawson, Thomas

January 2003

Dexter Ittner
Joan Kelly
Lee Wilkins



Chaplain Wohlers



Chaplain Hulen

MSP chaplains on the move

Wohlers says goodbye and Hulen says hello

The Rev. Bill Wohlers recently retired from Montana State Prison after serving as Protestant Chaplain since 1980. He traveled the state to raise money to build a chapel, which continues to be a peaceful and welcoming place for staff and inmates inside the walls of MSP.

Chaplain Wohlers conducted services each Sunday, led Bible studies on Wednesdays, coordinated with other faith groups that minister to the inmates, assisted families of inmates when deaths occurred, and was available to all who needed him.

His successor is Paul Hulen, who worked as chaplain for the past three years in the Idaho Correctional Center and for the Federal Bureau of Prisons in two locations - Federal Correctional Institute in Oregon and the Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. Chaplain Hulen has relatives in Stevensville and likes to hunt, fish and garden. He and his wife, Becky, a registered nurse, have two children, Rachel and Matthew.

Meanwhile, Chaplain Wohlers continues his fellowship at the felony DUI WATCH program at Warm Springs. He and his wife Marilyn have been married for 37 years, and have two grown children, Gordon and Tami. □

Vital Information

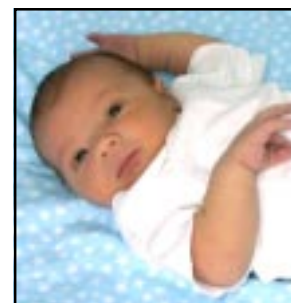
Births

December 2 – **Kyle Alexander McKee**, son of Region IV P&P Officer Laura McKee.

Marriages

June 15 — Region IV Probation and Parole Officers **Mary Aggers** and **Jeff Snell**. Both work in the Billings office, where Mary has a caseload focused on DUI offenders returning from the WATCH Program. Jeff supervises lower risk offenders who report via phone once per month.

November 8 — Region IV ISP Officer **John Williams** and **Margaret Mary Moorhouse** of Billings.



Note: The *Signpost* will print birth, marriage and death notices submitted by DOC employees. E-mail them to shilander@state.mt.us or deadhead them to Sally Hilander at Central Office in Helena. Photos will be included if space is available. □

Where's the DOC population report?

The facility population report is updated daily on the DOC website, so it is the most up-to-date information source. *Signpost* printing takes about 10 days, so the population statistics are outdated by the time they appear here. See the population report at:

www.cor.state.mt.us



MSP Honor Guard presents the colors

*By Linda Moodry, Public Information Officer
Montana State Prison*

The Department of Corrections was honored to be asked again this legislative session to present the colors February 9 at the State of Judiciary address by Supreme Court Chief Justice Karla Gray.

While Montana State Prison does not have an active Honor Guard, Warden Mike Mahoney felt it was important that we work to make this happen. The Inner Perimeter Security Team came through, taking the lead to recruit staff.

It was a privilege to attend this ceremony and watch the Honor Guard present the colors. Staff serving as Honor Guard members were:

Sgt. Bruce Miller – Sergeant Inner Perimeter Security Team

Sgt. Thomas Malcomb – Reception Sergeant

Rob Lehner – Inner Perimeter Security

Wes Raiha – Inner Perimeter Security

Thanks for giving of your time and energy. Your presence at the ceremony made a difference.☐

THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS MISSION

The Department of Corrections is dedicated to public safety and trust by holding adult and juvenile offenders accountable for their actions against victims through custody, supervision, treatment, work, restitution and skill development.



1,485 copies of this public document were published at a cost of 35 cents per copy, which is based on a total estimated cost of \$525. The *Signpost* is printed by Montana Correctional Enterprises, which provides vocational education training for inmates.

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